

# Oldest prehistoric find in Duxbury?

BY TERRY REIBER, SPECIAL TO THE CLIPPER

While walking in the Duxbury town forest near Round Pond I noticed a stone that looked like a shark's tooth. Upon further examination the stone had a smooth shape and a small hole bored into it. It looked like one half of a native Indian tomahawk or stone hammer which prompted me to do further research.

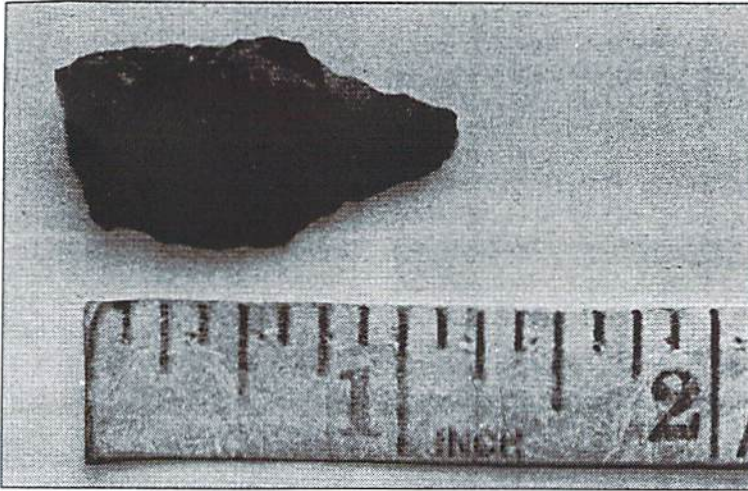
Pictures of the find were sent to Craig Chartier, Principle Archeologist of Plymouth Archeological Rediscovery Project. Craig has led a number of archeological digs in Plymouth, Duxbury and the South Shore area. Craig confirmed that the find was one half of an atlatl weight (refer to picture). An atlatl weight is affixed to a spear thrower called an atlatl.

Craig mentioned that the weight is from the Middle Archaic Period (North American equivalent to Europe's stone age) and could be 6,000 to 8,000 years old. An atlatl or spear thrower was used to hunt game prior to use of the bow



Archeologist Craig Chartier (left) and article author Terry Reiber (right) at the site inspection.





**Stark projectile point, approximately 6,000 to 8,000 years old.**

and arrow. The theory is the weight was affixed to the handle of the spear thrower to increase distance and accuracy. Atlatl weights may have symbolic meaning as they come in different shapes and sizes. This atlatl weight in particular is the unusual "whale tail" shape. Much work had gone into the whale tail weight because of its beautiful smooth shaping and boring of granite stone. Craig indicated this could be the oldest prehistoric find in Duxbury.

Craig decided to meet me for a site visit. While we walked the site near Round Pound, Craig immediately found a stark projectile point (refer to picture). The spear

point could have been used during the Middle Archaic Period as well. He indicated that the atlatl weight and stark point are very similar to artifacts

found during archeological site excavations in Carver prior to the construction of Route 44. Craig observed that the Round Pond site looked like a perfect place for a Middle Archaic Period encampment, offering clear observation of the pond and environs for hunting purposes.

An application process has been started to register the archeological site. This could present an opportunity to further assess the site and engage Duxbury residents in our prehistoric past. If anyone has an archeological find to share or further interest, contact Terry Reiber at 781-264-2412.



**Atlatl weight from the Middle Archaic period, approximately 6,000 to 8,000 years old.**